

MG Phillip R. Anderson

Statement Before the Mississippi River Caucus, 9 Mar 00
(Co-chaired by Congressmen Leonard Boswell and Kenny Hulshof)

Integrity – The Corps stands behind its integrity and our ability to make unbiased recommendations to the Administration and Congress. Regarding the Upper Mississippi and Illinois Waterway System Navigation Study, both internal and external reviews are being conducted to ensure that the results of the study are completely free of undue influence. All of our studies and reports must represent our best judgment of the benefits and costs to the Nation for any improvements we propose and must consider all points of view.

The Corps of Engineers has a long history of conducting studies and recommending projects that balance the competing goals of many interests in an unbiased manner. We must continue this tradition in a fashion that ensures the integrity of the processes the Corps uses to accomplish each of our missions.

Access – The Corps welcomes and actively solicits input to our studies from all stakeholders. And our process is set up to ensure that. The Corps Headquarters has also been actively involved in the Upper Mississippi – Illinois Waterway Navigation Study for the past two years to ensure that all stakeholders have input to the process.

Process – First, it is important to realize that this study is not complete. I would call your attention to the flow diagram entitled “Civil Works Project Development Process (Upper Mississippi Navigation Study)” which is on display to my _____ and also provided as a hand out. The large red vertical arrow on this flow chart represents where we currently are in this study. We are still in the study phase; we have not produced even a draft report; and, many reviews will be conducted before the study is completed. Any recommendation will receive two public reviews, a Headquarters policy review, State and Federal agency review, further reviews by the Assistant Secretary of the Army and OMB before getting clearance to submit the report to Congress for authorization and later funding. I am very confident that the checks and balances provided by our process will ensure that the public, the Administration, and the Congress are provided with the

data and information needed to make an informed decision on the future needs of the Upper Mississippi Navigation Study.

Grow the Program – Now with respect to concerns that the Corps is growing its program, the Nation has many water resource needs that have not been addressed. Locks are aging. Congestion is increasing on our waterways. Urban development demands flood and hurricane protection. Many ecosystems are suffering and badly need restoration. Municipalities and industries need reliable sources of water supply of adequate quality and quantity. These and other unmet needs must be recognized, discussed and responsibly brought to the attention of the appropriate policy makers. The Corps' concept of growing the program is simply to ensure that these needs are clearly identified and that viable solutions are offered.

In that regard I would like to call your attention to the brochure in your package entitled, "Join the Dialog, America's Water Resources Challenges for the 21st Century." This brochure lays out the waterway transportation, flood protection, ecosystem restoration, water supply, infrastructure and emergency response issues that need to be addressed. To insure we hear from all interested parties, the Corps will be holding a series of listening sessions across the country to stimulate the dialog. In the Mississippi Valley Division our listening session will be held in St Louis, 15 through 17 June, in conjunction with our already scheduled Partnering Conference. Through a series of workshops involving all participants at that conference, my objective will be to provide the Administration and this Caucus with the common themes we hear on the six issues described in this brochure. I would strongly encourage Caucus Members and Staff to participate in this Conference in St Louis. I believe it has great potential to help us all better understand and prioritize the water resource and environmental needs in the Mississippi Valley.

Senate Testimony – I'd like to report that on 24 Feb, Dr. Westphal, ASA(CW), and LTG Ballard, Chief of Engineers, testified before the Senate Environment and Public Works Subcommittee on Transportation and Infrastructure Chaired by Senator Voinovich. At that hearing Dr. Westphal and LTG Ballard covered many of the

same topics I'm addressing today. Senator Voinovich has forwarded a series of follow-up written questions to LTG Ballard which are in the process of being answered by individuals with the best first hand information.

OSC – I would also report the Office of Special Counsel in a letter dated 24 Feb has requested the Secretary of Defense to conduct an investigation of allegations made and to report findings within 60 days. We are fully cooperating with that investigation.

NAS – I would also report the Secretary of the Army has asked the National Academy of Science to conduct an independent review of this study. At the Corps' request the NAS recently reviewed the Corps' Principals and Guidelines so they are quite familiar with our study process. We will fully cooperate with their independent review.

Policy Review - Finally, I would report that prior to the recent attention in the media on this study, the Corps Headquarters initiated a preliminary policy review of this Study. That policy review has focused on the working alternatives and predecisional documents to insure the engineering, environmental and economic analysis is sufficient to move forward with an initial recommended plan and the preparation of a draft report for public review. That review is nearing completion. That process will be described by Dr. Jim Johnson, Chief of Planning and Policy for Civil Works in the Corps of Engineers.

Introduce Dr. Johnson for any comments.

Invite Q&As.

Closing Statement – Would like to thank the co-chairs and members of this Caucus for listening to us today. I want to assure you that the Corps has high standards of excellence and integrity in developing solutions to water resources problems. I would ask you to consider that 86 percent of problems studied do not meet the Corps standards for recommending construction of a project. Consider further that of the projects we do construct, our average rate of return on investment is 26 percent. The Corps maintains these high standards of excellence even as we have reduced our manpower by almost 10 percent during the past four years. Finally, I look forward to seeing all

of you at the Partnering Conference and Listening Session in St Louis in June.